

FRENCH INDO-CHINA

general disorder. The lack of system in provincial expenditures permitted a multitude of sharp practices and chaotic projects. For example, road-building in one province was undertaken without relation to the adjacent territory. Under Sarraut there was a simultaneous trend towards pruning local autonomy from beneath by the federal government, and controlling the independent services from above. In Ms reforming enthusiasm Sarraut lost sight of the value of provincial autonomy, as a training school in administrative methods, and as a means of showing to the natives to what use their taxes were being put. The General Services, in their overweening superiority, had refused to budget their expenses. The Public Works Service was notably arrogant in refusing to adapt its grandiose schemes to the colony's needs. They worked with the maximum of fuss and with the minimum of accomplishment. Being unable to pay for qualified technicians, all the services suffered from a plethora of poor functionaries. In 1807 there had been 2,860 of these functionaries: in 1911, 5,683, to whom were paid 27,771,000 francs, without counting the innumerable supplements for travel and sickness. The French personnel cost the budget 25 per cent of all its revenues. Sarraut's economies included advancing the retiring age, and a general elimination of the dead wood. Reducing the administrative unit was a step towards decreasing the white proletariat. Natives who were clamouring for government jobs could easily add more cheaply ill clerical positions. It was both pointless and wasteful for a Frenchman to travel thousands of kilometres simply to sell at the Saigon post office or to man the twenty-three light-houses of the colony „

Direct taxes form the revenue of the local budgets, and they share the advantage of being the only taxes which the Annamites pay willingly.

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the increase in revenue, when the markets and ferry
licenses 'were
from the Farms and changed 'into direct taxation
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